

0Dear Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Erica DePalma and I am the proud parent of both a General Ed student in Norwalk Public Schools and a student with disabilities who has a complex learning profile. I am also a Norwalk Board of Education member, having served as Chair of the Specialized Learning Committee, in addition to being a committee member on Policy and Curriculum. I am writing to you today to address the potential of H.B. 5283, which could ensure that students receive the full education funding they need to succeed and help our state succeed in the future.

Our state shows a surplus, and to that end, I ask that the legislature and the Governor consider accelerating ECS roll out and finally fully fund ECS. Norwalk's desperate need for funding has been compounded by the widening achievement gap and social-emotional consequences of COVID. We especially struggle to support our growing population of high-needs students.

Please help us compete to retain residents that are exiting to neighboring towns that boast per pupil spending that far surpasses Norwalk's. Please support raising the level of our schools to be more equitable to those surrounding towns. We are not in a position to support the needs of children today and certainly won't be a position to support them when federal funding runs out. We cannot wait for ECS dollars to be phased in over the next six years. An entire generation of children will be lost due to a lack of intervention specialists, special education teachers, counselors, and social workers.

Thank you,

Erica DePalma

110 Perry Avenue

Norwalk, CT 06850